



# SUSTAINING INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:

## PRT Process Impact through Spring 2024

Themes | Conclusions | Recommendations

*THE PARTNERSHIP RESOURCE TEAM (PRT) component of the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative (IEPI) provides technical assistance at no cost to institutions approved for support in their self-identified Areas of Focus (AOFs). The PRT process uses a positive “colleagues-helping-colleagues” model to work with colleges, districts, centers, and the system office to improve institutional effectiveness.*

*Prospective Client Institutions submit Letters of Interest (LOI) detailing their challenges, opportunities for improvement, and how the PRT process could help improve their institutional effectiveness. The Project Director reviews these LOIs and assembles PRTs, ensuring the Lead and Member expertise aligns with the Client Institution’s needs.*

*The PRT process typically involves three visits. During the first visit, the PRT actively listens to the Client Institution representatives, to gather more information and facilitate institution-wide discussions of the applicable issues. PRT Members listen to the institution representatives with an open mind and without drawing any conclusions about how the institution might address its challenges.*

*After the visit, the PRT prepares a Summary of Initial Visit (SIV), an overview of the information heard during the visit. The PRT also creates the Menu of Options (MOO), which includes ideas, suggestions for improvement, and best practices for addressing the identified challenges.*

*On the second visit, the PRT helps the institution draft an Innovation and Effectiveness Plan (I&EP) outlining specific strategies and techniques. During the third visit, the team conducts follow-up meetings with point persons and others to assess progress and provide additional guidance.*

*Institutions that complete the PRT process and submit their I&EP are eligible for Seed Grants of up to \$200,000 to support the implementation of their plans.*

## INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT MARKS THE EIGHTH annual evaluation assessing the impact of the full PRT technical assistance process on Client Institutions’ (CIs) efforts to build and sustain institutional effectiveness and PRT Members’ professional development and growth during the PRT Process. In this report, “Members” refers to both PRT Leads and other participating team members unless otherwise noted.

Each successive annual evaluation builds upon the previous year’s efforts, strengthening the quality of analysis, conclusions, and recommendations by expanding both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Past evaluations have included individual and group interviews with key participants, such as CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, institutional representatives, and PRT Members. This year, group interviews were structured around

PRT Member roles and functions within their respective teams, along with whole-team interviews for specific institutions.

In addition to the qualitative inquiry, this evaluation includes a survey administered to critical CI participants. The survey covers various topics, such as initial and sustained progress in the Areas of Focus outlined in their Innovation and Effectiveness Plans and the broader impact of PRT technical assistance on institutional systems and processes. The PRT Member survey elicited information on how participating in the PRT process enhanced their professional development and networking, influenced their work or activities at their home institutions, and contributed to their professional growth overall.

Findings from the surveys and the interviews were analyzed to identify effective practices that can be shared across the system. The evaluation also generates themes, conclusions, and recommendations for enhancing the delivery of technical assistance through the PRT Process. Additionally, participants provided insights on broader issues affecting the California Community Colleges system, such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA), the Vision for Success, and other relevant issues.

The report is organized as follows: an overview of the PRT process, an analysis of survey results and interview findings, followed by themes, conclusions, and recommendations based on the analysis.

## APPLICATION AND BREADTH OF THE PROCESS

**51** PROCESSES  
WITH ONE  
CYCLE

**177** PROCESSES  
WITH TWO OR  
MORE PRTs

**228** TOTAL  
PRT  
PROCESSES

### CLIENT INSTITUTION PARTICIPATION

Colleges and districts are encouraged through varied communications to submit LOIs if they determine that technical assistance would benefit them in addressing their AOFs. LOIs are reviewed and approved cyclically, with two cycles of assistance provided each year. As of the date of this report, 130 separate CIs (colleges, districts, centers, and the system office itself) have participated in or have been approved to participate in at least one PRT process. Sixty institutions have received or will receive assistance from two successive PRTs each and 19 from three successive PRTs each, resulting in 228 PRT processes over 19 cycles. The primary goals of the PRT component of IEPI for CIs include improving institutional effectiveness and operations and expanding organizational capacity. The chart at left notes CIs' participation in the PRT Process for the life of the PRT initiative.

### PRT MEMBER PARTICIPATION

PRT members are recruited and assigned through an application process that matches individual member skills, abilities, and talents with specific institutional needs. Over the ten-year life of IEPI, over 600 California

community college administrators, faculty, and staff have served on at least one PRT in nearly 1,400 separate assignments. Over 355 members have served on 2 or more PRTs. Nearly 90 current or former chief executive officers have served on PRTs with 65 of them serving on multiple teams. In addition, 39 non-CEOs have served as Leads. For PRT Members, PRT goals include professional development and increased learning and connections throughout the system in a network of PRT process participants. Additionally, through engagement in the process, PRT Members bring back practices, procedures, and strategies learned from the CI and from each other to apply at their home institutions. The following figure depicts the PRT Member participation in the PRT Process for the life of the PRT initiative.

## Service on Partnership Resource Teams, Cycles 1-11A

1395

Separate PRT  
assignments

87

Current or Former  
CEOs on PRTs

65

CEOs on  
2 or more  
Assignments

613

Community College  
Professionals as PRT  
Members or Leads

### CLIENT INSTITUTION AREAS OF FOCUS

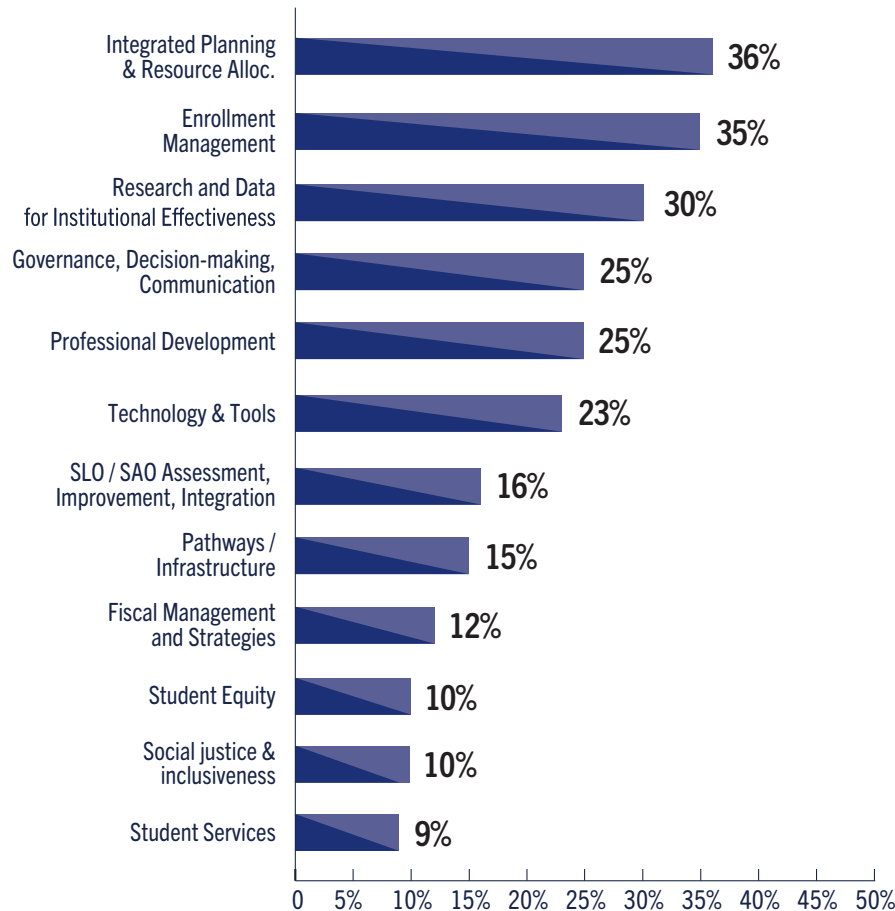
---

Client Institution CEOs consider and prioritize Areas of Focus (AOFs) and generate Letters of Interest (LOIs) based on each college or district's specific needs and distinctive culture. A review of the Areas of Focus at each institution during the period of interest for this evaluation reveals patterns of AOFs shared by CIs in the system. Top AOFs across institutions include enrollment management, integrated planning and resource allocation, research and data for institutional effectiveness, governance and decision-making, technology and tools, and professional development.

Over the life of IEPI, the most common categories of the AOFs have remained largely stable; however, the variety of AOFs continues to increase, and the way CIs frame the AOFs has continued to evolve. In the first two years of IEPI, Innovation and Effectiveness Plan strategies often focused on addressing accreditation compliance and fiscal stability, matching the initially stated goals of the initiative. At the outset of IEPI, CI participation in many PRT processes centered on avoiding or removing ACCJC sanctions or preparing for an imminent institutional self-evaluation report. Accreditation continues to be a factor in requesting services, but using PRTs to address external accountability efforts is now more proactive than reactive.

In the last seven years of IEPI, CIs' confidence in the PRT process as a method for improvement has continued to grow and mature. The number of institutions signing up for additional PRT cycles continues to rise, with peer assistance becoming a regular resource in the toolbox of institutional effectiveness. The following chart lists the top 12 AOFs ranked by the percentage of full-PRT processes to date that included those AOFs.

## Twelve Most Common PRT Areas of Focus, Cycles 1-11A\*



\* Percent of 228 full-PRT processes approved through date of report.

## CLIENT INSTITUTION SURVEY RESULTS

Surveys were administered to Client Institution (CI) representatives, including CEOs, substantive point persons, and other relevant representatives capable of providing actionable information for the evaluation. The survey instrument included a series of open- and closed-ended questions regarding the institution's Areas of Focus (AOFs), as well as factors that support or limit progress.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF FOCUS

Institutional respondents were asked to identify the two most important AOFs from their complete list, rated the progress on each, and outlined the positive and negative factors impacting that progress. Additionally, CI representatives provided an estimate of the progress their institution might have made without PRT services.

The key AOFs identified by CIs include Integrated Planning and Resource Allocation, Enrollment Management; Governance, Decision-making, and Communication; Professional Development; Research and Data for Institutional Effectiveness; Student Equity (including DEIA and Anti-Racism), and Technology

and Tools as the most critical AOFs. The following table provides a detailed list of the most important AOFs identified by CI representatives.

MOST IMPORTANT AREAS OF FOCUS OF RESPONDING CLIENT INSTITUTIONS	
AREA OF FOCUS	COUNT OF INSTITUTIONS
Integrated Planning and Resource Allocation	7
Enrollment Management	6
Governance, Decision-making, and Communication	4
Professional Development	4
Research and Data for Institutional Effectiveness	4
Student Equity (including DEIA and Anti-Racism)	3
Technology and Tools	2

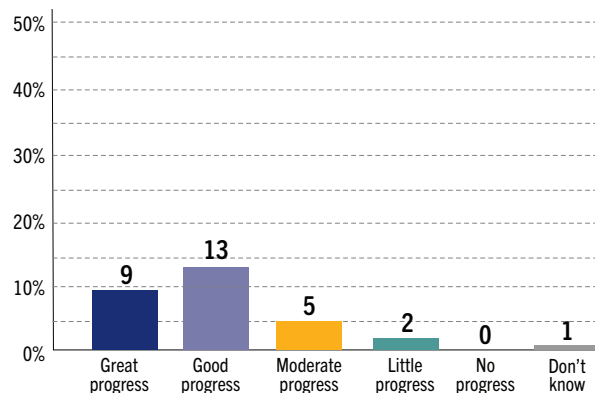
CI representatives rated their institution's overall progress on the most important AOF on a scale of 1 (No Progress) to 5 (Great Progress). The progress assessed was attributed, at least in part, to the institution receiving PRT services.

#### OVERALL PROGRESS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT AOFs

Approximately 75% of the respondents (73.3%; N=22) reported making either *Good* or *Great Progress* on the most critical AOF. Another 17% (16.7%; N=5) reported *Moderate Progress*. About seven percent (6.7%; N=2) reported Little Progress. Finally, about 3% (3.3%; N=1) reported that they *Did Not Know* about the progress made. No respondent reported that the institution made *No Progress at All* on the AOFs.

The following chart illustrates the overall progress reported by CI representatives on the most important AOFs.

Overall Progress on MOST Important Area of Focus



## FACTORS SUPPORTING OR IMPEDING PROGRESS ON AOFs

CI representatives were also asked to identify the factors that supported progress on their most important AOF. The top responses were coded, categorized, and analyzed for emerging themes. Three primary themes were identified, as shown in the following table.

### MAIN FACTORS HELPING SUSTAIN PROGRESS ON THE MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF FOCUS

- ▶ Communicating the AOFs with the Entire Institution After the Three-Visit Process (4)
- ▶ Finding an Institutional Champion to Shepherd Efforts During and After the Three-Visit Process (4)
- ▶ Incorporating the AOFs into College Processes (3)

Across the past seven cycles, CIs have consistently highlighted the role of an institutional “champion” as a critical success factor in sustaining progress on AOFs. Similarly, communicating institutional efforts related to AOFs throughout the college has been a key contributor to sustaining progress.

When asked about factors impeding progress, the top responses were also coded, categorized, and analyzed. Four key themes emerged, as outlined in the following table.

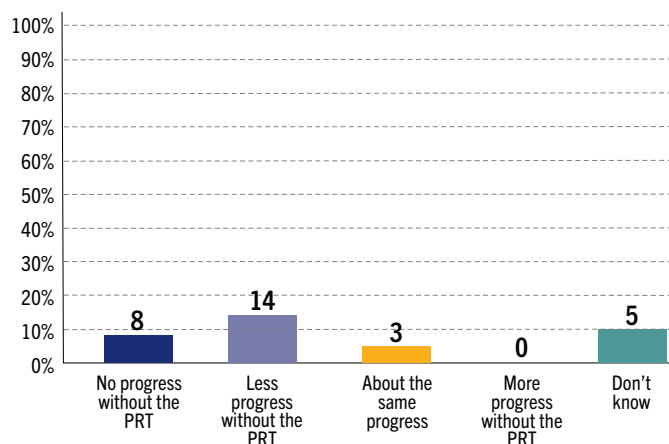
### MAIN FACTORS LIMITING PROGRESS ON MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF FOCUS

- ▶ Conflicting Institutional Demands and Requirements (5)
- ▶ Existing Institutional Culture, History, and Structure (3)
- ▶ Institutional Attrition in Key Leadership Positions (including Administration, Point Persons, and Other Important Representatives) (3)
- ▶ Lost Momentum on the AOF after the Three-Visit Process (2)

## ESTIMATED PROGRESS WITHOUT PRT SERVICES ON THE MOST IMPORTANT AOF

Approximately three-fourths of the respondents (73.3%; N=22) indicated that their institution would have made **Less Progress or No Progress** on the most important AOF without PRT services. Ten percent (10.0%; N=3) indicated that the institution would have made **About the Same Progress**, approximately 17% (16.7%; N=5) reported that they **Did Not Know** about the progress. Notably, no respondents reported that their institution would have made **More Progress** without the PRT support. The following chart presents the full results of the Client Institution’s estimated progress without the assistance of the PRT.

Estimated Progress Had Institution NOT Received PRT Services for MOST Important Area of Focus



## THE SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF FOCUS

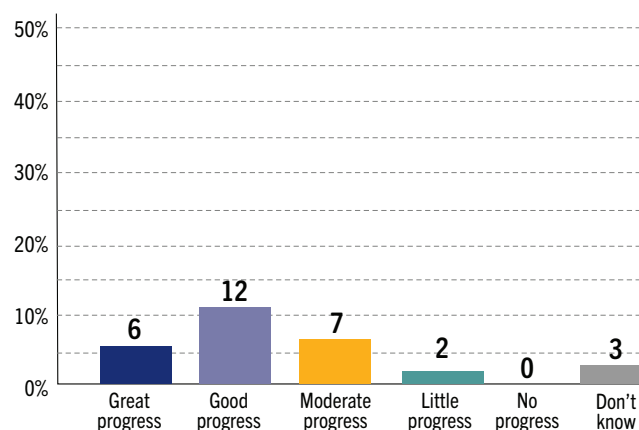
CI representatives were asked to identify their institution's second-most important AOF, if any, (some institutions had only one AOF). Respondents were asked to estimate the progress the institution would have made had the institution without PRT services and to identify factors that either sustained progress or limited progress on the second-most important AOF. The following AOFs were identified as the second-most important: Enrollment Management; Integrated Planning and Resource Allocation; Professional Development; Research and Data for Institutional Effectiveness; Student Equity (including DEIA and Anti-Racism); and Governance, Decision-making, and Communication.

AREA OF FOCUS	COUNT OF INSTITUTIONS
Enrollment Management	5
Integrated Planning and Resource Allocation	4
Professional Development	4
Research and Data for Institutional Effectiveness	4
Student Equity (including DEIA and Anti-Racism)	4
Governance, Decision-making, and Communication.	3
Other: Fiscal Management and Strategies (2), Technology and Tools (2), and Student Services (2)	6

### OVERALL PROGRESS ON THE SECOND-MOST IMPORTANT AOFs

Reported progress on the second-most important AOF was substantially less than for the most important AOF. Sixty percent (60.0%; N=18) of respondents reported **Good or Great Progress** on the second-most important AOF. The difference is unsurprising, given the limited institutional resources and the dedicated efforts on the most important AOF. The following chart details the overall progress on the second-most important AOF. The main factors sustaining or limiting progress on the second-most important AOF mirrored those identified for the most important AOF.

Overall Progress on SECOND-MOST Important Area of Focus





## SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PRT PROCESS

---

In the final section of the survey, CI representatives were asked for suggestions to improve the PRT process. The top responses for suggested improvements were coded, categorized, and examined for the existence of themes from the data. The most common response provided by institutional representatives was “None.” However, a recurring theme among other responses was the need for flexibility in completing the PRT process, allowing adjustments based on institutional needs, scheduling, and progress.

### SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PRT PROCESS (CLIENT INSTITUTION REPRESENTATIVES)

- ▶ None (11)
- ▶ Flexibility in Completing the PRT Process (depending on institutional need, scheduling, and progress) (3)

## PRT MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS

---

### GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND CONNECTION

---

PRT Members responded to a series of open- and closed-ended questions about the impact of their participation in the PRT process, specifically regarding:

- Their professional growth and development
- Their connections with other professionals within the California Community College system
- Whether their home institution applied any practices learned through their participation

Most PRT Leads are chief executive officers at their home institutions; however, the initiative assigns leaders to other roles when their expertise closely aligns with the Client Institutions’ AOFs. PRT Members come from various administrative, faculty, and support roles across instruction, student services, administrative services, and other areas.

### PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

---

#### PRT MEMBERS (EXCLUDING LEADS)

PRT Members (excluding Leads) were asked to rate the impact of their participation on their professional growth and development using a scale of 1 (*Little or No Positive Effect*) to 3 (*Strong Positive Effect*).

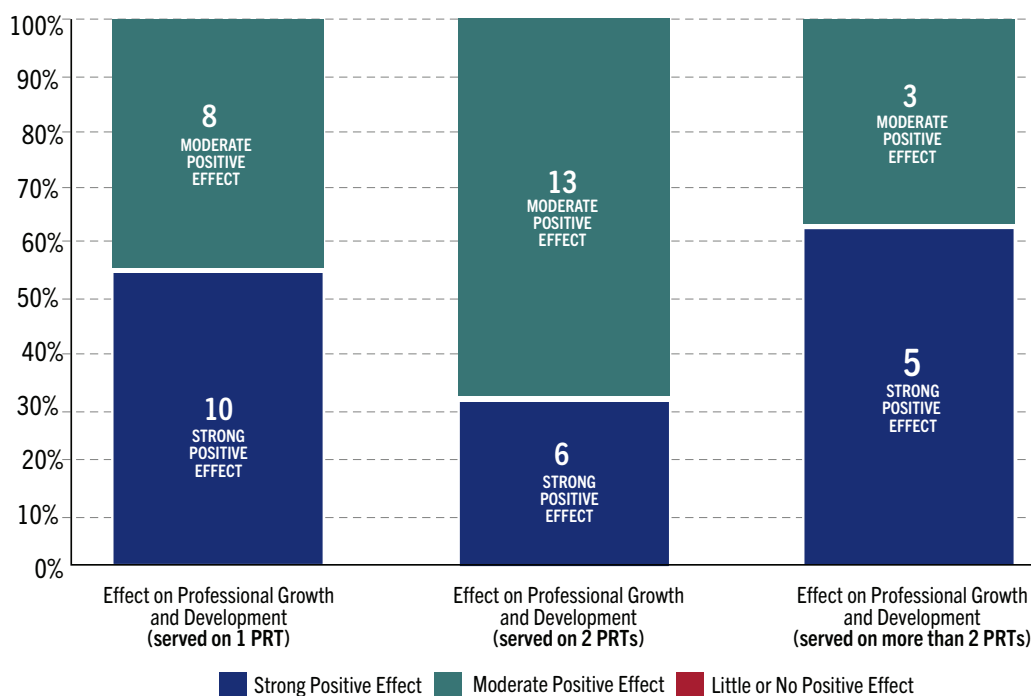
Among respondents who have participated in one PRT, all (100%; N=18) reported a *Strong or Moderate Positive Effect* on their professional growth and development, with just over half 55.6%; N=10 reporting a *Strong Positive Effect*. No respondent reported *Little or No Positive Effect*.

Again, among respondents who have participated in two PRTs, all respondents (100%; N=19) reported a *Strong or Moderate Positive Effect* on their professional growth, with just under one-third (31.6%; N=6) reporting a *Strong Positive Effect*. No respondent reported *Little or No Positive Effect*.

For respondents who have participated in three PRTs or more, all respondents (100%; N=8) again reported a *Strong or Moderate Positive Effect* on their professional growth and development, with five of the eight (62.5%; N=5) reporting a *Strong Positive Effect*. No respondent in any category reported *Little or No Positive Effect*.



## Effect of Participation in PRT Process on Professional Growth and Development (PRT Members Excluding Leads)



### PRT LEADS

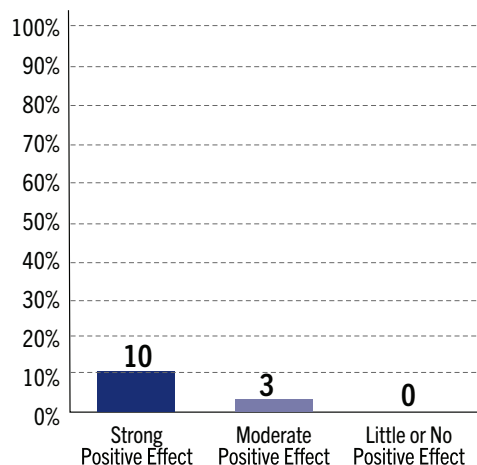
PRT Leads were similarly asked to rate the impact of their participation on their professional growth and development on a scale of 1 (*Little or No Positive Effect*) to 3 (*Strong Positive Effect*). All Leads (100%, N=13) reported a **Strong** or **Moderate Effect** on their professional growth and development, with approximately three-fourths (76.9%; N=10) reported a **Strong Effect**. No Lead reported **Little** or **No Effect**.

Both PRT Leads and Members identified the main aspects of the PRT process responsible for their professional growth and development ratings. The top responses were coded, categorized, and analyzed for themes. Three critical themes emerged.

First, appreciative inquiry and active listening were reported as vital training components that contributed to positive ratings. Additionally, respondents pointed out that the comradery experienced from participation in the team was a critical factor in their ratings for importance. Finally, observing other CIs address challenges similar to those in their own institutions helped PRT Members reflect on the challenges in greater depth and apply what they learned to their home institutions.

The following table outlines critical factors contributing to professional growth and development as identified by PRT participants.

### Effect of Participation in PRT Process on Professional Growth and Development (PRT Leads)



### THE MAIN ASPECTS OF THE PRT PROCESS RESPONSIBLE FOR RATINGS

- ▶ Skills Learned (Appreciative Inquiry, Active Listening) (9)
- ▶ Teamwork and Collegiality of the PRT (8)
- ▶ Seeing Sister Institution Processes and Structures Address Similar Challenges (7)

## CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

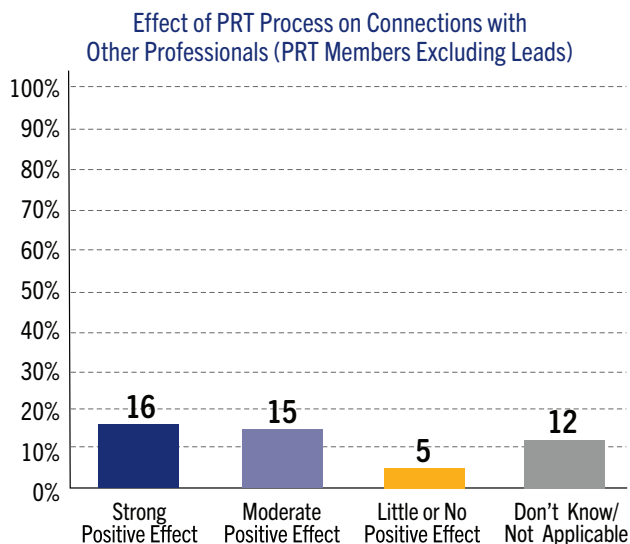
PRT Members were asked to rate the effect of participation in the PRT process on their connections with other professionals in the California Community College system, using a scale of 1 (*Little or No Positive Effect*) to 3 (*Strong Positive Effect*). Almost two-thirds of the PRT Members (64.6%; N=31) respondents reported that their participation in the PRT process had a *Strong or Moderate Positive Effect* on their connections, with one-third of the total respondents (33.3%; N=16) indicating a *Strong Positive Effect*. About ten percent (10.4%; N=5) reported *Little or No Positive Effect*. One-fourth of the respondents (25.0%; N=12) reported *Don't Know/Not Applicable*.

The large number and percentage of respondents reporting that the PRT experience either had little or no effect or they do not know whether the experience did have an impact on connections with other professionals may be a reflection of a lack of clarity or confusion on the respondents' parts about the notion of connection with other professionals. Moreover, the notion of professionals may be job-specific (e.g., faculty or business services), and sharing PRT experiences might be less readily applied in the workplace.

The open-ended responses did not provide insights as to why approximately one-third of PRT Members reported *Little or No Effect* or chose "*Don't Know/Not Applicable*."

Focusing on PRT Leads specifically, most respondents (84.6%; N=11) reported a *Strong or Moderate Positive Effect* on their connections with other professionals, with nearly three-fourths (72.7%; N=8) reporting a *Strong Positive Effect*.

Both PRT Leads and Members identified the primary aspects of the PRT process that contributed to their ratings. The top responses were coded and categorized, with PRT Lead leadership and teamwork being the most commonly mentioned factors. The accompanying table provides further details on the top responses and counts for the main aspects of the PRT Process responsible for the ratings.

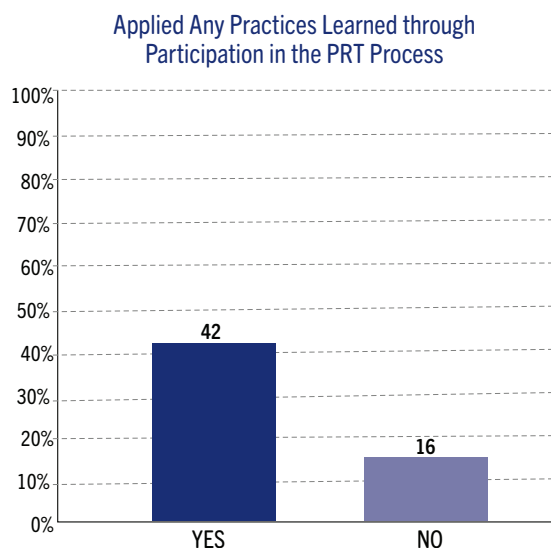


### THE MAIN ASPECTS OF THE PRT PROCESS RESPONSIBLE FOR RATINGS

- ▶ PRT Lead Mentorship (5)
- ▶ Teamwork and Collegiality of the PRT (8)

## APPLYING PRACTICES LEARNED

Next, PRT Members were asked whether their home institutions had applied any practices learned through participation in the PRT process. Respondents answered either “yes” or “no.” Approximately three-fourths (72.4%; N=42) reported applying techniques, strategies, or ideas to their home institutions. While open-ended responses were individual in nature and could not be categorized into more prominent themes, the marked proportion of positive answers highlights the potential ripple effect of the PRT process on the system beyond its direct impact on Client Institutions.



## EFFECTS OF SERVING ON MULTIPLE PRTS

PRT Members who had served on more than one PRT were asked to describe the effects of participating in additional PRTs on their professional or personal growth, or on their home institutions. While the responses were mostly general in nature, many noted that serving on multiple PRTs broadened their understanding of the more significant issues faced by California Community Colleges. Members emphasized the value of this continued experience.

## SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PRT PROCESS

In a final area of interest, the survey asked PRT Members to offer suggestions for improving the PRT process. Responses were coded and categorized, and common themes were identified. The most frequent response was “None.” However, similar to feedback from Client Institution representatives, PRT Members suggested that increased use of technology before and during the process would enhance their collaboration with Client Institutions.

### THE MAIN ASPECTS OF THE PRT PROCESS RESPONSIBLE FOR RATINGS

- ▶ None (15)
- ▶ Better Use of Technology and Social Media for Communication (9)

## EMERGENT THEMES FROM THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

This year's qualitative evaluation methods built upon the insights gathered from previous years' interviews. For the 2024 Process Impact Report, the evaluator chose to conduct group participant interviews as the primary inquiry method. The groups were organized into the following categories:

- Client Institution team, including CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, and other relevant institutional representatives
- Client Institution team alongside their PRT Lead for the specific process
- PRT members assigned to the same institution for a specific cycle
- PRT members categorized by role and function

Individual interviews were conducted as needed to complement the group interviews and offer an alternative space for participants to share responses. While individual interviews were not

the primary focus, every effort was made to hear from all participants who volunteered.

In previous evaluations, group interviews proved effective in fostering dynamic conversations that highlighted experiences and perspectives not always surface in one-on-one settings. This year, the groups were selected based on institutional affiliation, team composition, and PRT function, offering fresh perspectives and vantage points compared to previous evaluations, which focused more on participant roles and experience.

The group format allowed participants to respond to open-ended prompts, and react to each other's input, and contribute freely to the conversation. Interviewees built upon and refined other participants' responses, and alternative viewpoints were shared without interviewer interference.

Scheduling group interviews posed a challenge due to the busy calendars of the participants.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS

(CEOs, Point Persons, and Other Representatives)

The following themes emerged from the group interviews with CI teams consisting of CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, and other relevant institutional representatives:

### PRT PROCESS AND TECHNIQUES

- ✓ Addressing institutional improvement challenges is most effective when done collaboratively, fostering mutual learning and open-mindedness.
- ✓ PRTs take a supportive "colleagues helping colleagues" approach, allowing Client Institutions wide latitude to explore and resolve their institutional effectiveness challenges.
- ✓ Client Institutions find that the positive approach demonstrated by PRTs encourages positive outcomes throughout the PRT Process.
- ✓ Most Client Institutions recognize the areas of institutional capacity required to drive systematic improvement. The PRT Process provides the structure and support to help them achieve these goals.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS *(continued)*

**“This was not our first PRT so we already had an idea of the process which made going through things easier and took out the angst of wondering how things worked.”**

— Client Institution CEO

- ✓ Client institutions that have participated in multiple PRTs gain a deeper understanding of technical assistance and derive more value from repeat participation in the PRT Process.
- ✓ Using Appreciative Inquiry, Client Institutions view past mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures, which helps build a positive foundation for addressing new challenges.

**“Having the time and space to talk with peers from other colleges really helps frame the challenges we faced from a new perspective - one that showed that solutions were possible.”**

— Client Institution Substantive Point Person

- ✓ The PRT Process offers a clear structure and timeline for exploring issues, considering options, and making decisions related to their AOFs.

- ✓ Client Institutions value the PRT Process’ systematic, solutions-driven approach to driving institutional improvement.
- ✓ The PRT Process supports institution-wide decision-making by offering a structured process.
- ✓ Correctly framing the conversations during the first and second visits contributes to successful outcomes for Client Institutions throughout the PRT Process.

**“We weren’t rushed by the team to come up with solutions right away. We took time to discuss ideas which we rarely have a chance to do given our normal busy schedules.”**

— Client Institution CEO

### CLIENT INSTITUTION SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- ✓ Most obstacles to success in the AOFs that Client Institutions are tied to challenges in motivation and change management, rather than a lack of knowledge to solve problems.
- ✓ Institutions benefit from having a “champion” guide the PRT Process and maintain progress in the AOFs. This champion, while passionate and knowledgeable, is not necessarily identified as tied to a specific position or role within the institution.
- ✓ Clear and ongoing communication about PRT efforts helps foster buy-in for and long-term receptivity to technical assistance provided.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS *(continued)*

- ✓ Client Institutions appreciate the flexibility and nimbleness of the PRT Process in navigating current change processes within colleges and districts.

**“We freely ‘poach’ ideas from other schools and leading a PRT is no different. If we see a good idea at the Client Institution, we are bringing it home for sure.”**

— Client Institution CEO

- ✓ The success of the PRT Process is influenced by the existing culture, structures, and processes within the institution.

**“Making decisions here [at our institution] takes time and requires some finesse which the PRT caught on to at the start and helped us move.”**

— Client Institution CEO

- ✓ Participation in the PRT process is often driven by preparations for upcoming accreditation visits or responses to accreditation recommendations.

- ✓ Knowledge gained by Client Institutions that have participated in more than 2 PRTs delved deeper into the PRT Process as opposed to wider.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS AND PRT LEADS

The following themes emerged from the group interviews with Client Institution CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, and relevant institutional representatives, along with PRT Leads assigned to the institution:

### PRT PROCESS AND TECHNIQUES

- ✓ PRT and Client Institution representatives view each other as peers working together to solve significant challenges at the college or district level.

**“We really appreciated the flexibility of the PRT Process to let us pivot and shift to different ideas and solutions.”**

— Client Institution CEO

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS AND PRT LEADS

*(continued)*

- ✓ PRTs help Client Institutions overcome obstacles using methods such as active listening, appreciative inquiry, and change management techniques, fostering new strategies, techniques, approaches, and solutions.
- ✓ The professional relationships built during the PRT Process between Client Institution representatives and PRT Members extend beyond the three-visit PRT process, contributing to ongoing collaboration and improvement.

**“The MOO was very useful to pull ideas that we thought might work best given our college’s history.”**

— Client Institution Representative

- ✓ Client Institutions find the MOO and the guidance provided by the PRT valuable for brainstorming best practices, identifying solutions, and implementing strategies.
- ✓ PRTs consistently came prepared for all three visits, and teams were well-matched to address the institution’s unique AOFs.
- ✓ PRTs foster a transparent environment that encourages open discussion and effective problem-solving.
- ✓ Careful matching of PRT Members’ expertise to the institution’s AOFs significantly contributes to the success of the PRT.

- ✓ The Menu of Options (MOO) provided useful options and examples for the institution’s consideration.

**“I have had the chance to be with the same PRT lead and I love it because I learn so much. In the latest PRT, when I saw she was the lead again, I was so excited. I did not care where we were going for the PRT, I was going to learn and have fun.”**

— PRT Member

- ✓ The effectiveness of the PRT Lead in facilitating discussions during the Visits is crucial, with the PRT’s success heavily depending on the Lead’s expertise.

**“The open-mindedness displayed by the team was so appreciated by the institution. The team did not come pre-judging our work.”**

— Client Institution Substantiate Point Person



## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH CLIENT INSTITUTION TEAMS AND PRT LEADS

(continued)

### CLIENT INSTITUTION SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- ✓ Institutions need to create intentional opportunities within existing structures for dialogue among stakeholders, allowing collective interpretation of insights and findings from work on the I&EP.

**“Colleges feel so overwhelmed now with no time to tackle the big problems because they are too busy putting small fires out.”**

— PRT Member

- ✓ Initiatives such as DEIA and Vision 2030 require institutional professionals to collectively analyze data, interpret its meaning, and apply new strategies to improve student outcomes. These efforts are becoming increasingly vital to institutional effectiveness.

**“I was surprised by how prepared the team was for Visit 1 and Visit 2. They had done their home work and came with an open mind.”**

— Client Institution Representative

- ✓ PRTs came prepared for all three visits in the process, and each team’s integrated planning and enrollment management continue to grow in importance, institutions must prioritize their integration within long-term strategies to ensure ongoing improvement and effectiveness.
- ✓ Institutional effectiveness strategies are often developed through trial and error. The PRT Process fosters an environment where institutions feel more comfortable testing, refining, and implementing new ideas.

**“We included the PRT as part of our accreditation efforts to show we were trying to address challenges outside of the box.”**

— Client Institution Substantive Point Person

- ✓ Institutions now function in more complex, uncertain environments, requiring greater preparedness. The PRT Process helps institutions now develop skills and strategies to navigate these post-pandemic challenges.
- ✓ Successful PRT practices are often expanded to other areas within the institution, supported by key representatives who champion these efforts and demonstrate the benefits of new tools and techniques.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PRT MEMBERS

---

The following themes emerged from the group interviews with PRT Members as teams, including PRT Leads:

### PRT PROCESS AND TECHNIQUES

- ✓ Observing how colleges and districts build momentum for change provides PRT Members with valuable insights that they can apply to their home institutions.

---

**“I had the chance to meet up with a representative from the college we visited later at a conference, and it was great to hear about the successes and the struggles after the PRT Process was over.”**

— PRT Member

- 
- ✓ Earlier and broader access to Client Institution representatives and documents would enhance PRT Members’ preparedness in their roles in the PRT Process.

---

**“The process for getting reimbursements and arranging for travel, etc. was really smooth which was important to me.”**

— PRT Member

- ✓ Digital-native PRT Members express a strong preference for more technology and social media integration to streamline meetings, share files, and communicate, improving overall efficiency.
- ✓ PRT Members expressed interest in learning more about the other PRTs working in the same or previous cycles. Having access to a participant list, a topic inventory, and a list of AOFs from Client Institutions would help build a shared knowledge base.
- ✓ Participation in multiple PRT cycles enhances professional growth and provides a sense of accomplishment, contributing to both individual development and system-wide improvement.

---

**“I listed my PRT experience on a recent job application because the skills I learned can be used in many settings.”**

— PRT Member

---

### CLIENT INSTITUTION SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

- ✓ The Client Institutions are most successful when they focus on achievable short-term goals first. This builds a sense of self-efficacy and momentum for goal attainment.

## GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PRT MEMBERS *(continued)*

---

- ✓ While many Client Institutions have a solid understanding of what needs to be done to address their AOFs, they often require guidance on how to proceed. The MOO provides valuable resources to help them navigate these challenges.
- ✓ Client Institutions often seek quick fixes to problems, but as they engage in the process, they recognize the need for tools that support more informed decision-making.
- ✓ The success of the PRT Process is driven more by the institution than by the PRT itself. The PRT provides structure, space, and guidance, but the responsibility for performance improvement rests with the college or district.
- ✓ Institutions value the time between visits, using it to work on initiatives, reflect on challenges, and engage in meaningful dialogue to identify and implement solutions.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Participation in the PRT Process offers professional development that extends beyond webinars and conferences, allowing members to apply techniques and strategies directly.

---

**“You have to fight the urge to want to get in there and help the college right away. You have to sit back and listen. That patience pays off later on after you have had a chance to reflect on the area of focus.”**

— PRT Member

---

- ✓ Many PRT Members view their involvement in the PRT process as a pathway to professional growth and advancement opportunities.
- ✓ While meaningful participation requires a significant time investment, PRT members consistently report that the experience is rewarding and valuable.

---

**“I have both received services and my institution and been a PRT Lead and it has impacted how I interact with faculty and staff at my institution. I listen a lot more.”**

— Client Institution CEO and PRT Lead

---

- ✓ PRT Members benefit from the collegiality built through their participation in the PRT Process. These connections often continue beyond visits, creating a network of shared professional interests.
- ✓ After returning to their home institutions, PRT Members implement strategies and techniques learned during the process, such as active listening, change management, and appreciative inquiry.
- ✓ PRT Members consistently cite the mentorship and guidance provided by the PRT Lead as the most valuable aspect of their PRT experience.

## CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are based on the findings from the group and individual interviews and survey responses gathered in this year's evaluation:

- ✓ Recruitment of new PRT Members for processes is essential, as repeat participation enhances members' understanding of technical assistance and increases the value they derive from the process.
- ✓ The execution of the IEPI PRT Process and its high quality of service is consistently praised by Client Institution representatives, PRT Leads, and Members, who highlight the effectiveness of communication and collaboration with the Project Director and grant staff.
- ✓ The Project Director and grant staff have successfully removed barriers, ensuring a successful experience for PRT Leads, Members, and Client Institutions. This servant-leadership, problem-solving approach to meeting PRT and Client Institution needs is seen as invaluable.
- ✓ Client Institutions value maximum flexibility in identifying challenges and designing solutions. Representatives particularly appreciate the collaborative approach to addressing tough challenges.
- ✓ The success of the PRT Process has mainly been attributed to the open-mindedness and constructive dialogue between the Client Institution and PRT Members during the visits.
- ✓ PRT Members foster a nonjudgmental, supportive environment that reframes challenges as opportunities, making it easier for colleges and districts to seek help tackling daunting problems.
- ✓ Techniques such as Active Listening and Appreciative Inquiry have been essential in helping PRT Members and Client Institutions address their challenges effectively.
- ✓ While the principal focus of the project has been improving institutional effectiveness for Client Institutions, PRT Members highly value mentorship and team experience, seeing it as an essential form of professional development that is often lacking in traditional settings.
- ✓ Institutions must adapt to technological advancements and the emerging needs of digital-native learners, requiring greater agility in delivering curriculum and services.
- ✓ Colleges and districts are mindful of the Chancellor's Office initiatives, such as Vision 2030 and DEIA, and many see the PRT Process as a structural and systems support tool to help the institution with this work. Efforts on these initiatives are currently done by existing institutional committees, councils, and task forces.
- ✓ Institutions continue to identify enrollment management, integrated planning, data use, professional development, and governance and communication as critical Areas of Focus.
- ✓ Success often hinges on having institutional "champions" who drive progress during and after the PRT Process.
- ✓ Emerging institutional leaders and new students are digital natives which affects how institutions apply interventions and how PRTs store and share data.
- ✓ Faculty value participation in the PRT process both as part of the Client Institution and as PRT Members.

## CONCLUSIONS *(continued)*

- ✓ The PRT Process encourages colleges and districts to reflect on how time, money, and efforts could be better allocated to improve institutional effectiveness.
- ✓ Decision-making at colleges and districts is not purely an academic exercise; it is also a social process influenced by relationships and collaboration.
- ✓ PRT Members and Client Institution representatives want to engage in more long-term follow-up to better understand the outcomes of the PRT Process on to which they contributed.
- ✓ Experimentation in finding solutions, facilitated in the PRT Process, should be encouraged, fostered, and rewarded. The PRT Process helps institutions move from reviewing findings to trying something new.
- ✓ Traditional college and district processes are often saddled with hierarchy, centralization, standardization, and structure, and accountability is assessed based on external standards.
- ✓ Institutions find that this model impedes the development of a more learner-centered institution.
- ✓ College leaders no longer see the traditional top-down management model to address institutional challenges, favoring flexible, systems-based models to address complex challenges.
- ✓ This more flexible model, facilitated in the PRT process, approaches challenges from a system's perspective and does not seek linear, spot solutions to time-bound problems.
- ✓ Successful institutions rely on a decentralized decision-making model, where leaders at all levels contribute to problem-solving and innovation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions and analysis of the interview and survey data, the following recommendations are proposed to improve and augment the PRT Process:

1. Preserve core essential elements of the Three-Visit PRT Process, allowing Client Institutions the flexibility necessary to address their Areas of Focus.
2. Enhance marketing of the PRT as a valuable professional development opportunity and experience for new PRT Members and Leads.
3. Consider expanding training in Active Listening and Appreciative Inquiry for experienced PRT Members and Leads to deepen their skills and improve Client Institution experiences.
4. Reflect on how the PRT Process can be adapted to meet the emerging needs of Client Institutions, particularly in the face of the current disruptive environment.
5. Develop and apply strategies to maintain connections between PRT Members before, during, and after their participation in the technical assistance work.
6. Encourage CEOs and point persons at Client Institutions to promote greater faculty participation in developing solutions and creating I&EPs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS *(continued)*

7. Foster dialogue with Chancellor’s Office staff on integrating Vision 2030 and DEIA initiatives into the PRT Process to better serve Client Institutions that focus on these goals.
8. Regularly promote the PRT process, especially to new institutional leaders who may not be made aware of its benefits.
9. Provide a digital space for PRT Leads and Members and Client Institutions to share best practices, tips, and success stories, facilitating cross-institutional learning.
10. Drawing on the products of the successful PRT Symposium, implement a system to share resources, such as a comprehensive “Menu of Options,” for Client Institutions and future PRTs to examine and consider.
11. Develop and implement methods to document and leverage the growing network of conversations and interactions among PRT Members and institutions at regional meetings, conferences, and webinars.
12. Invest in improved technology for communication, file sharing, and collaboration within the PRT Process, particularly for working on SIVs, MOOs, and PRT Summaries.
13. Connect Client Institutions with successful “champions” from past PRTs to sustain progress beyond the Three-Visit Process.
14. Provide additional, flexible, on-demand, and real-time training for PRT Members on topics relevant to their roles.
15. Expand training content to include motivational and effective strategies to enhance PRT performance and facilitate institutional change.
16. Regularly engage past and current PRT Members in recruiting new participants to ensure a strong and ongoing pool of qualified personnel for future PRT assignments.

## METHODOLOGY

This evaluation used a mixed-method approach to evaluate the longer-term effects of the PRT process on various areas of stakeholder interest.

The evaluation design consisted of seven inquiry methods:

- ✓ **A survey administered to Client Institution representatives**, including CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, faculty, and other key participants. This survey targeted institutions that initiated their PRT processes during or after Fall 2019 and completed their final PRT visits before July 2023, the period of interest for this eighth evaluation.
- ✓ **A survey administered to PRT Leads and Members** who participated during the same period encompassing both Leads and Members.
- ✓ **Structured group interviews with Client Institution representatives**, including CEOs, substantive and logistical point persons, and other key institutional representatives
- ✓ **Structured group interviews with Client Institution representatives**, and their respective PRT Leads.
- ✓ **Structured group interviews with PRT Leads and Members** assigned to the same Client Institutions.
- ✓ **Structured individual interviews with additional PRT Leads and Members** who participated in PRT processes during the period.
- ✓ **Structured individual interviews with additional Client Institution representatives** who participated in the PRT processes during the period.

**The evaluation yielded 35 survey responses** from representatives of 30 institutions (out of 48 invited). Respondents rated progress on their most important and second-most important Areas of Focus (AoFs) and reported on the progress they believed would have been made without PRT assistance. Suggestions for improving the PRT process were also gathered.

**Fifty-eight survey responses were received from PRT Members** (out of 174 invited). These respondents reflected on how their participation affected their professional growth, development, and connections with other professionals in the California Community Colleges. They also shared whether their home institutions had applied practices learned through the PRT process. Members who participated in multiple PRTs discussed the cumulative effects on their professional or personal growth, as well as the impact on their home institutions. Like the Client Institution representatives, PRT Members also offered recommendations for refining the PRT process.

**Ten group interviews were conducted with Client Institution teams**, including some with the addition of their PRT Leads. Three additional group interviews involved PRT Leads and Members from the same Client Institutions. Ten individual interviews were conducted with CEOs, substantive or logistical point persons, key institutional representatives, PRT Leads, and Members. These interviews explored the direct and indirect impacts of the PRT process, how it might help institutions navigate recent significant changes in California community colleges, obstacles to sustained institutional progress, and



## METHODOLOGY *(continued)*

whether the PRT process influenced other institutional structures, systems or processes. All interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom.

**As in previous annual reports**, surveys served as the primary tool for assessing progress on the AOFs and identifying supporting or hindering factors. This allowed interviewees to delve deeper into the qualitative effects of the PRT process during interviews.

**In light of the intended use of the findings to improve PRT process practices**, the evaluator invited the Project Director to participate in selected group interviews, with prior consent from the interviewees. The Project Director's participation was optional, and no interviewees objected to their involvement.

**Interviews, which lasted approximately one hour each**, followed tailored protocols based on participants' roles but allowed for open discussion of related topics. The interviews were conducted over twelve weeks in the summer and fall of 2024.

*Robert Pacheco, Ed.D.,  
External Evaluator  
robert\_pacheco@icloud.com*



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE  
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA  
916.445.8752

SIRIA S. MARTINEZ, PH.D.  
Assistant Vice Chancellor of  
Student Equity and Success  
California Community Colleges  
Chancellor's Office

PEGGY LOMAS, M.A.  
IEPI Project Director

DAYLENE MEUSCHKE, Ed.D.  
Vice President, Institutional  
Research, Planning, and  
Institutional Effectiveness  
Santa Clarita CCD



COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS/  
SANTA CLARITA CCD  
SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA  
661.362.5500